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A WORLD SURVEY OF CIVIL AVIATION POLICY

The documents comprising this report analyze a cross-section of the world's civil air establishment from the standpoint of Government policies and procedures. The studies were prepared at the request of the President's Air Policy Commission, for the purpose of ascertaining the salient aspects of civil aviation abroad as related to national policy under the widest possible range of conditions.

The survey, as expected, has encountered civil air operations under extremely varying conditions. The countries covered include great powers (UK and USSR),* as well as small nations (Netherlands), some with primitive economies (China, Peru). The survey has observed the development of civil aviation under totalitarian governments (USSR, prewar Germany) and under governments which have maintained an unblemished democratic tradition (Sweden). Some of the countries are enjoying prosperity (Canada), while others (UK, France) struggle for their very existence to overcome the enormous dislocations of the war. Many of the countries are situated advantageously across the natural arteries of world air traffic, while others (Argentina, Brazil) must attune their civil air policy to a more regional primary interest.

These conditions, as the survey confirms, exert a profound influence on the varied objectives being pursued throughout the world in the development of civil aviation. Civil air policy in a given country is dictated by a combination

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*See ORE 67 (secret) for [REDACTED] and Civil Aviation Policies, and ORE 68 (secret) for Soviet Military and Civil Aviation Policies.

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Note: The Library of Congress has available a report on Civil Aviation in Prewar Germany, prepared by its Aeronautics Division.

of political, economic, and strategic factors, and by the country's geographical position. Advantages of innate aptitude and enterprise, therefore, can only begin to operate after these basic conditions have set the stage.

Regardless of the limitations under which every country operates, almost universal recognition of the significance of civil aviation prevails. There is scarcely a country which would not immediately expand its civil air activities if this were possible. Policy-makers everywhere appear to recognize that civil aviation is the most dynamic force in drawing the countries of the world physically closer for better or for worse, and that the total potential of civil aviation, including its ultimate military application, far transcends its strictly peace-time importance. As early as 1930, an official League of Nations report contained the statement that state participation in European civil aviation was an act of politics rather than of economics. By 1938, the British had clearly understood the military significance of civil aviation, as evidenced in the Cadman report, which stated that the problem of the air is like "two sides of a single coin," that is to say, "the military aspect of aviation cannot fundamentally be separated from the civil aspect." In 1940, the Germans were employing civil aviation as a geopolitical instrument: a German geopolitician stated that "the airplane's speed and radius of action makes thinking possible in terms of continents."

SUMMARY

There is full realization by countries fearful of invasion, as well as by those which know that they may one day be forced to engage in large-scale military operations, that the men who are organizing civil air transport today are establishing the means of carrying tomorrow's armies. The keen interest displayed by military authorities of many countries in the progress of civil aviation in their own and other countries appears to be explained by such considerations. The ~~eleven~~^{eight} studies in this survey indicate that civil air policy is almost directly controlled by the military in five of the countries, and strongly affected by military considerations in four others, while only in two countries is no military control exercised. In this connection it is noteworthy that all of the countries having powerful military establishments permit them a measure of control over civil aviation.

It might be assumed, by an observer acquainted only with civil air transport in the US, that this advance in transportation is being developed primarily for the benefit and convenience of the private citizen who wishes to travel fast on errands of his own choosing. The fact remains, however, that for a variety of reasons a considerable part of the world's travelling population is unable to make use of existing air transport. In the Soviet Union, for example, which operates, or at least owns several thousand transport aircraft, few "average citizens" travel by air, except on government business. Civil aviation is used as an important instrument of the state to further its extensive development plans. The USSR, however, sometimes chooses to move groups of workers ostentatiously by air to recreational centers, and occasionally transports a special mercy case on humanitarian grounds, with appropriate propaganda treatment. In many other parts of the world the high cost of air transportation is in itself

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sufficient to place it beyond the reach of large sections of the population.

Surprisingly little private flying is being done in any country, and what little there is results primarily from government aid to flying clubs and training programs.

The civil aviation establishment in most cases is not what a country would like to have, but what it can afford to support. The principal limitations are: (a) lack of tradition in air transport operations; (b) inability to develop a manufacturing industry; and, (c) inability to maintain unprofitable air transport operations. International operations are limited chiefly by: (a) the absence of empire interests or prestige requirements; and (b) the sovereign right of other countries to control their own air spaces.

There are certain countries, Sweden, The Netherlands, and Belgium, which have succeeded in maintaining substantial positions in the field of international civil air transport, because their efficiency, coupled with a tradition in this activity, has enabled them to achieve profitable operations in spite of their obviously limited resources.

The USSR occupies a peculiar position in civil aviation. While it possesses vast and varied resources to support long-range international operations and has political objectives far beyond its borders, it has seen fit to adopt a policy which has resulted in the containment of its large civil air establishment within the USSR and Soviet-controlled areas. (There may be military significance in the fact that the USSR has been unwilling to assign more than a negligible number of its large fleet of air transports to its badly equipped satellite airlines.) While the rapid expansion of civil aviation within the USSR may be considered certain, its emergence into the field of international air transport will depend upon future developments which cannot now be predicted.

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The survey discloses a wide difference in the degree of subsidization by governments of their civil aviation programs. The general conclusion to be drawn is that most countries recognize that financial support of civil aviation is justified to the extent required by (a) the unwillingness of private capital to underwrite national-interest air developments, or (b) the inability of the country's airlines to pay their own way. Some countries are unable, however, to finance extensive subsidization, and therefore the degree of support in a given instance may indicate no more than the liquidity of a country's treasury.

The survey does not confirm any superiority for particular methods of establishing and implementing civil air policy. While a wide range of efficiency and a corresponding diversity in organizational methods are disclosed, a comparison of methods as they affect efficiency would be almost meaningless. It is evident, for example, that the most ideal organizational charts could not produce efficiency in a country like China which has existed for years on the verge of collapse; whereas, the resources of the US might permit a pre-eminence in civil aviation in spite of a certain degree of inefficiency of governmental organization.

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